**Foundations of College Writing – From Topic to Problem/Question**

Below are guidelines for changing an issue/event/person to a problem or question about which you can make an argument.

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| **Possible Topic** | **What Others Have Said** | **Problems/Questions** | **What I Can Add to the Conversation** |
| Example: *Taylor Swift* | Taylor Swift is a star because her music appeals to lots of different people  Taylor Swift is a star because of her looks and personality | Why is Taylor Swift so popular? What genre(s) does her music fit into? What are her musical influences?  What makes a person a celebrity? Is it a good thing or a bad thing that we judge celebrities based on their lives as well as their art? | History of her music career and what other musicians shaped it.  Analysis of her songs (music and lyrics) showing similarities/differences with country, rock, etc.  Identify qualities that make a person famous; show how Taylor exhibits these qualities  Evaluate celebrity qualities; argue for why certain ones are more or less important |
| Lucille Ball | Lucille Ball is an influential star because she followed her dreams of acting and because she was the first woman to run a major production company, Desilu Studios.  Lucille Ball is an influential star because her personality made people laugh, and her shows still have that effect today. | Why is Lucille Ball well known in the world of comedy and acting? How many times was she turned down before her talent was noticed? How did she influence other women of her time?  What characteristics of her personality helped her become successful? Do many people still enjoy her shows today? | -Analyze her unsuccessful acting career before she made it big.  -Research how she compared with other women of her time period-similarities/differences  -Explain how/when she first became interested in acting.  -Examine her beneficial qualities that she used in her career and how they were used in her shows.  -Describe what it was about her/her shows that made it a successful comedy. |